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APRIL 29th & 30th
Reflexology & Natural
Healing workshops

THE HUE and CRY

a radical publication
from the heart
of the Hudson Valley
with contributions from
beyond

(and the 1st volume of our
farm newsletter : The Germinator)



Hue and Cry
a loud clamour or public outcry
references personal responsibility
in demanding justice

also the name of a lively
summer weekly devoted to the
happenings of the art colony Maverick
in Woodstock, NY 1923
printed by Hervey White



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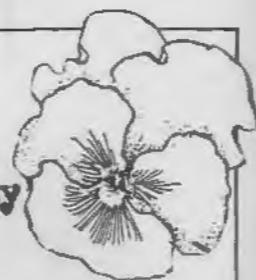
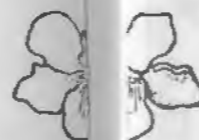


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"long ago, man abandoned and forgot all he ever really needed to know about living a harmonious life with the earth. But if we are able to awaken to what is essential for our happiness, there's still hope that each of us may lead an authentic life."

-Dan Price



Teeth of the Lion

This column is an ode to the history and virtues of the many useful plants growing around us that we often overlook, or are unfamiliar with, or refer to as 'weeds'. It is a good feeling to know and use them – calming and simple. Such know-how should be generously passed on, especially to children (who tend to find wild-harvesting to be outrageously exciting), for to be found in it are precious observations and thought provoking connections to the life of our food. Such connections to our food's source can foster gratitude and love for it, which makes a meal truly wholesome.

- Courtney Stryker

Hello! Welcome!

Meet the common Dandelion. Perhaps you already know each other. It is not unlikely, for the sweet and stable dandelion is as well established upon the landscaped we call our home as we are. This is a story of why we're lucky that it is the dandelion that is so common.

It was the French who named the plant 'dent-de-lion', or 'teeth of the lion', describing the broad-toothed, jagged edge of the deep green leaves. (Unlike the lion, it is how much sunlight the dandelion gets that decides the size of its teeth. A plant in full sunlight will be deeply toothed, or bare only slight teeth in the shade.)

The dandelion's generic name is 'Taraxacum', and the species name is 'officinale'. Taraxacum comes from the Greek words 'taraxos', meaning disorder, and 'akos' meaning remedy. The designation 'officinale' indicates that it was officially listed as a medicinal herb.

There is another common name, also apparently given by the French; 'pissenlit' or its English adoption, 'piss-a-bed', no doubt due to its diuretic properties. It is, as a diuretic, superior to many produced synthetically by pharmaceutical companies. (Ironically, the U.S. imports over 100,000 pounds of dandelion root annually for use in patent medicines.) It increases bile production by the liver and urinary output from the kidneys, removing poisons from the body, acting as a tonic and a detoxifying stimulant. Its opening and cleansing quality is very good for removing obstructions of the liver, gall bladder and spleen, and diseases arising from them, such as jaundice or gallstones. For those purposes, use a strong decoction of the root, which can also be used as a wash for sores. They drank the decoction in the old days for fever during plague. Perhaps that was for its general healthful benefits and internal stimulation, but the plant also possesses some narcotic and procures rest and sleep in those with fever.

It is also said that this herb helps one see farther without a pair of spectacles. It contains lots of potassium, sodium, phosphorus, iron, betacarotene, vitamin A and C, B1 and G, and calcium. Young dandelion leaves can and should be collected and put raw in salad or steamed and eaten like Spinach. In Greek mythology, Hecate fed Theseus dandelions for thirty days to make him powerful enough to defeat the Minotaur.

What does it mean to be a creature of four seasons?

Answer #1

Talking about weather is not small talk. It's how we share our experience of something greater than ourselves and acknowledge our sensitivity to the environment. Unfortunately, people like to connect in a way that doesn't create real vulnerability. We often share negative opinions of the weather and the seasons. This tendency reminds me of men talking shit about women and queers. Buying into negative attitudes about the weather reinforces a fear of any force that doesn't fit into society. I propose that we express our pride in being creatures of four seasons, embrace the fucking cold and fucking hot, spend lots of time outside and get to know the infinite details of our cyclical climate.

Answer #2

A winter creature sets out in the dark, wrapped up in wool, trudges, trudges, makes a path in the snow, watches shifting blue shadows, licks its cold paws, returns in the dark, hides under blankets.

A spring creature does not yet believe in warmth. The smell of earth is an old lover asking the creature to let down its guard. The spring creature says "Maybe." but has no choice in the matter. It gets soaked and muddy when the rain comes. Although still cold, it strips bare and enters the stream.

A creature of summer has hands stained red. It learns to breathe in the thick humidity and lie low in the highest heat. Sweat flows from every pocket of flesh. This creature walks through fields in the dark and opens its mouth to let caterpillars crawl inside.

A creature of fall is full and tired, drinks color, rustles, rustles, feels dry in the throat, collects and stores, regrets and plans, builds a big pile of dead stalks from the garden and sets it on fire.

Question by Ashley Loehr, Answers by Lailie Weidman

Harnessing urgency into action

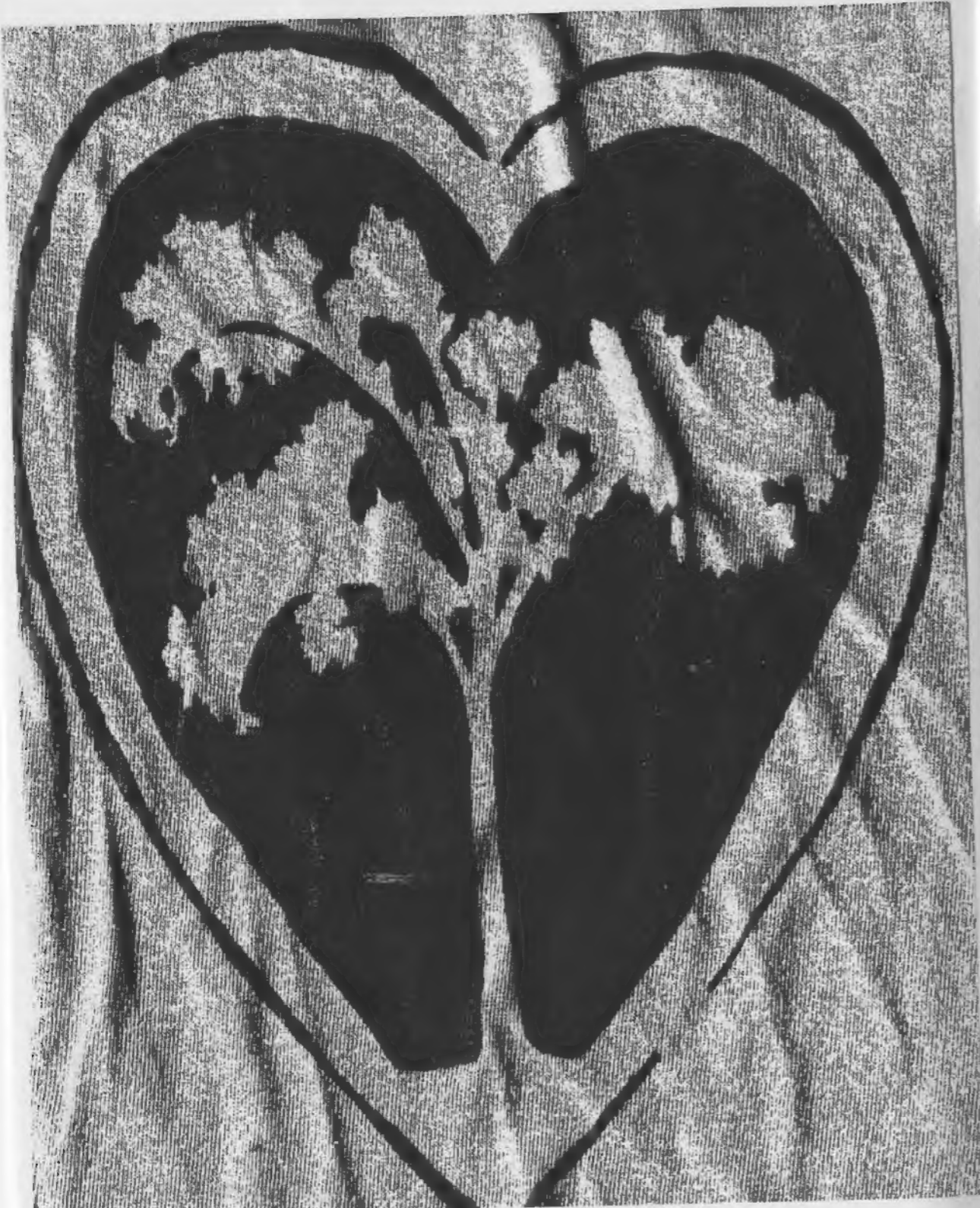
In these days of modernity, full of comically tragic portraits, blood, guts and glory, it is quite easy to feel lonely. The constant North American vision is truly haunting, hundreds of white lights coming toward you, up and down mainstreets, in and out of shopping malls and gas stations. Six lane highways and hummers. Liability, fear and self-hatred abound. Screens that blink at you faster than you can articulate your fingertips into a hello. Weight shifts strangely in age-old imperial ways and good fortune is poorly defined and selective. We sensationalize the battle, and then find the daily battles so sadly unromantic.

So many people experience dissatisfaction with the way things are, a restlessness in the spot they were born into. There are pages of speculations and solutions to the seemingly endless absurdity behind book bindings on library shelves. For so long I thought that thinking (long and well, best and better) would provide an end to my own restlessness. I thought that somewhere in the delicately guarded folds of academia there would be a tangible notion that I could rest on as reason. Something that would just make me feel better. But intellectualizing suffering seems less and less useful to me the more time I spend outside. At the end of the day full of sun, wind, moving heavy rusty things and digging around in the dirt, I have a sense of calm in my forehead and between my ribs.

I keep finding that my hands look better, more porous and well-used when they are near simple things. That dreary shifting back and forth of weight on my two legs in a parking lot can instead be steady steps through the garden that lend me a steady understanding. There is a space to create an aesthetic counterweight, something to put in that void of bustle. Another set of values where the answers to my questions seem to defy capitalism! I would be hard pressed to describe my learning process with land that would grant me any marked achievement. There is no unending ascension only unending renewal and destruction. There are beautiful things that also serve as productive acts of resistance. Feeling thirsty and pumping water, feeling cold and building a fire. Functional things that softly rob us of our self-importance.

Clearly, the world is in a dire state of disrepair, so alarming that I wonder how we all sleep at night. At times living symbiotically on the land just appears to me a self-indulgent way to duck out of the Ugliness. There are awkward days, when you are looking for a power tool, probably to cut something to build something that might hold something and everything is missing, dull or rusty, and every step forward only comes after two or three circles right around what you thought would be so easy. There are the days when I worry that pulling weeds and pumping water instead of shaking fists and stomping my feet is just an easy way out or worse yet, the first sign of me growing soft.

But the truth is that I am a good sleeper, I always have been. The awkward days often end with my appreciation of my good company and a good meal. Having direct interaction with my sources of nourishment is what keeps me well worked with good reason. I sleep soundly and wake with the fullness of the day.



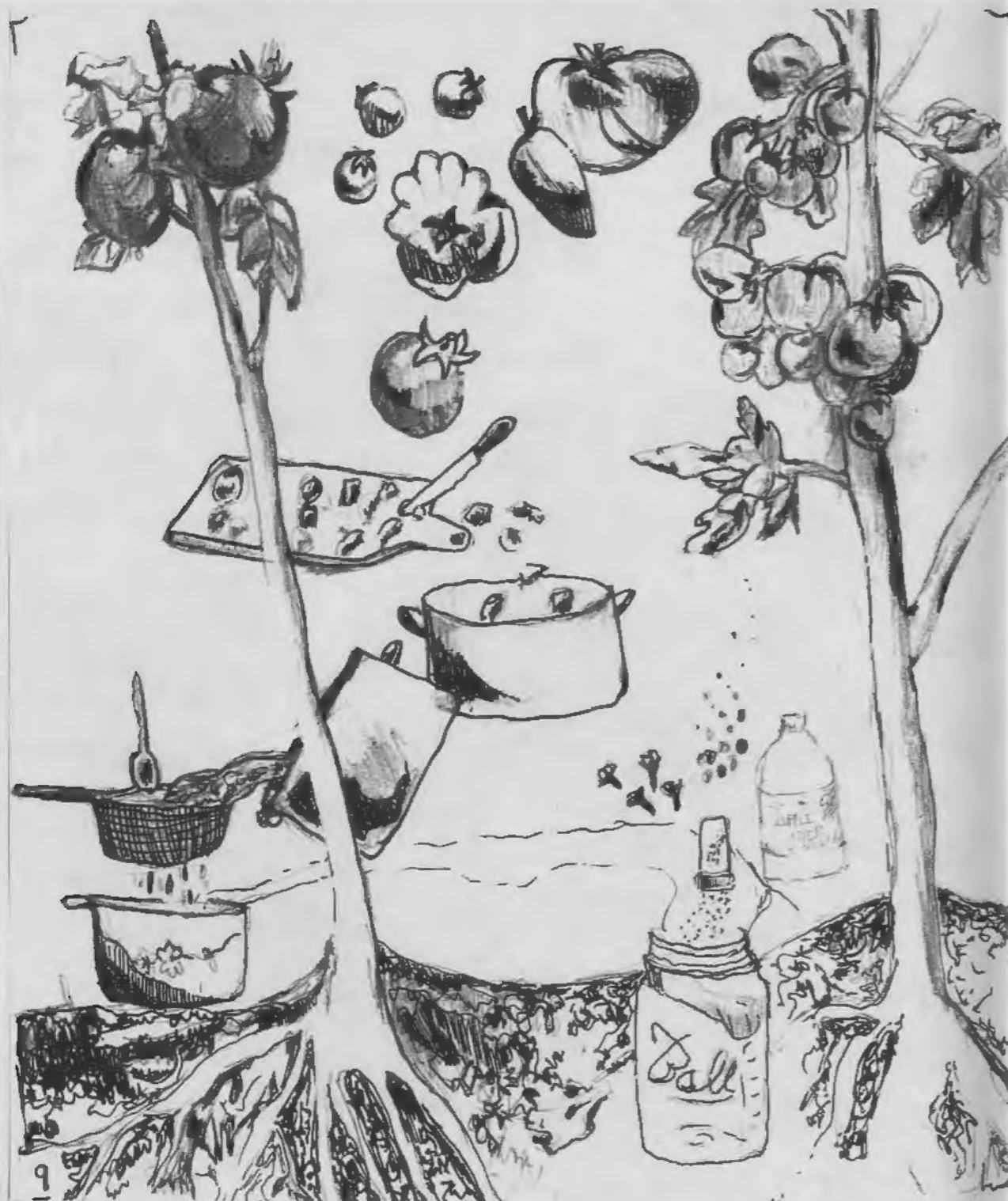
SAY HELLO TO THE BRASSICA FAMILY!

THEY LOOK SO DIFFERENT FROM ANYTHING ELSE IN THE FIELD IN THEIR THICK + HEAVY SHADES OF BLUE + GREEN + RED + PURPLE - THEIR VARIATED + SAVOYED + RUFFLED + SHINY LEAVES + TINY YELLOW FLOWERS WHEN THEY GO TO SEED. I LOVE BRASSICAS! KALE, BROCCOLI, CALIFLOWER, CABBAGE, BRUSSEL SPROUTS, COLLARDS - THEY'RE ALL DESCENDED FROM A WILD PLANT THAT GREW ON THE COASTS OF EUROPE LONG AGO - AND THEY ALL HAVE THE STORIES + LIVES OF THOUSANDS OF FARMERS WOVEN INTO THEIR LITTLE SEEDS.

I LOVE THIS FAMILY OF PLANTS BECAUSE THEY **THRIVE ON DIVERSITY**. THEY HAVE SELF-INCOMPATIBILITY MECHANISMS ENCODED INTO THEIR DESIGN SO THAT THEY'RE FORCED TO CROSS WITH EACH OTHER + EACH NEW CROSS BETWEEN SEPARATE VARIETIES CREATES A RUSH OF GENES THAT MAKES NEW HEADY COMBINATIONS. IT'S TRICKY TO SAVE BRASSICA SEED IN THE HUDSON VALLEY BECAUSE THEY'RE BIANNUALS + THEY NEED TO MAKE IT THROUGH THE WINTER TO SEED THE FOLLOWING SPRING. THIS COMING FALL WE'LL BE READY WITH COLD FRAMES + LOTS OF MULCH, SAVING THE HEALTHIEST + PRETTIEST PLANTS TO CROSS + ADAPT TO OUR LAND + OUR LIVES. ONE HEALTHY KALE PLANT MAKES TENS OF THOUSANDS OF SEEDS. HOPEFULLY ONE OF THESE DAYS WE'LL BE ABLE TO SHARE SOME WITH YOU!

♡ SASCHA.

TEXT BY SASCHA
KALE LOVE STENCIL BY COURTNEY



Homemade Ketchup

Pick a whole bunch of ripe tomatoes from the garden. Select good firm ones. This is a perfect way to use up those paste tomatoes that just aren't very exciting in a salad. Cut them all into pieces about the size of your thumb above the knuckle. Throw them all into a pot and cook them down (medium-low) stirring & mashing occasionally. When they are good and pulpy with no remaining chunks, it's time to strain! Get a coarse sieve & push all of the pulp through it with a wooden spoon, letting the liquid fall into a bowl. Put the seeds and skin aside & let the juice cook. As it cools it will congeal a little. Then... for every gallon of juice you have, add...

- 1 cup seed & skin junk that you saved
- 1/2 cup Brown sugar
- 2 1/2 TABLESPOONS ground mustard
- 1 TABLESPOON honey
- 1 TABLESPOON Allspice
- 3 TABLESPOONS salt
- 1 1/2 TABLESPOONS black pepper
- 1 HEADING TEASPOON ground cloves
- 1 PINCH cinnamon
- 1 PINT apple cider vinegar
- 1 TEASPOON finely chopped ginger

Once you add everything, simmer slowly until it looks like ketchup! (about 2 hrs) Stir it once in a while too..!

A Rural Uprising Emerges!

A brief report on our town politics, by Kaya Weidman, informed by Gregg Osofsky

In our small town of Pine Plains, New York, a group of about 500 citizens, from in and around Pine Plains have joined together to form Pine Plains United, a community organization that stands up to the corporate ventures that seek to further the sprawl of second homes and golf courses into the small agricultural communities of the Hudson Valley. The following excerpt is reprinted from the first edition of their newsletter, "Plain Speaking":

In recent years, three major development proposals have come before the Town Planning Board. Taken together they would add 1,300 new households to Pine Plains, roughly doubling the size of our town. Such development will completely alter our landscape, not just visibly, but economically and culturally. Such sweeping changes have made many of us wonder; Where will Pine Plains be in 5 years? What will happen to our taxes? What will happen to downtown? What businesses will survive? What will happen to our cherished farmland and rural character? What about traffic, infrastructure, the school system and government services? Pine Plains United grew out of a collective concern that unless we, the residents, start asserting more clearly what we want, we won't be the ones answering those critical questions about our future.

It has become a common sight around town to see the bumper stickers of PPU, "Small not Sprawl" and "Pine Plains, Love it or Lose it" stuck next to Bush Cheney stickers, peace symbols, yellow ribbons, rainbow triangles, honor roll stickers, green party stickers, and even NRA logos. The members of this community have found a commonality that binds them together against the power of large-scale development and ecological devastation. There is great potential for nonpartisan grassroots activism in rural areas where the common values of the citizens seem to be rooted in agriculture, small business and land preservation. Pine Plains United offers an inspiring example of the strength of community values overcoming the divisive nature of politics.

The Germinator!

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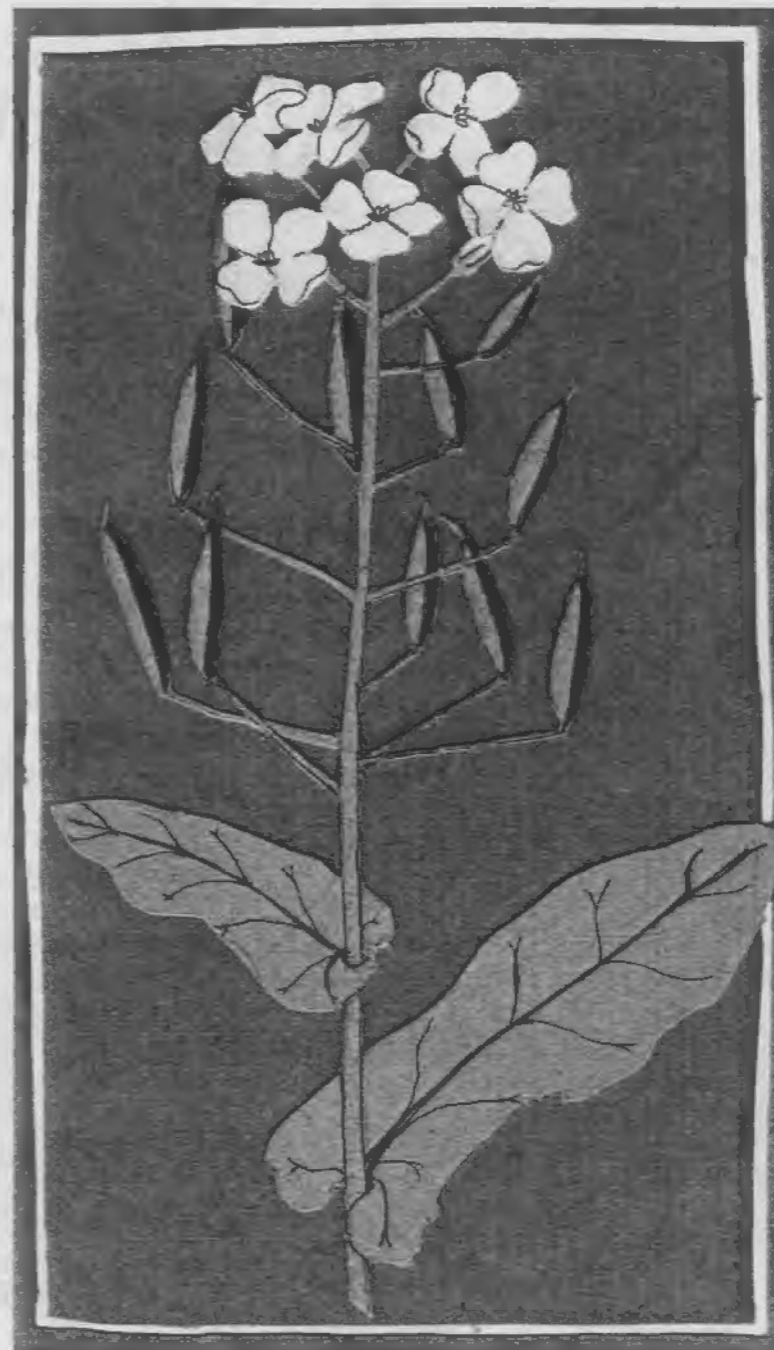
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Welcome

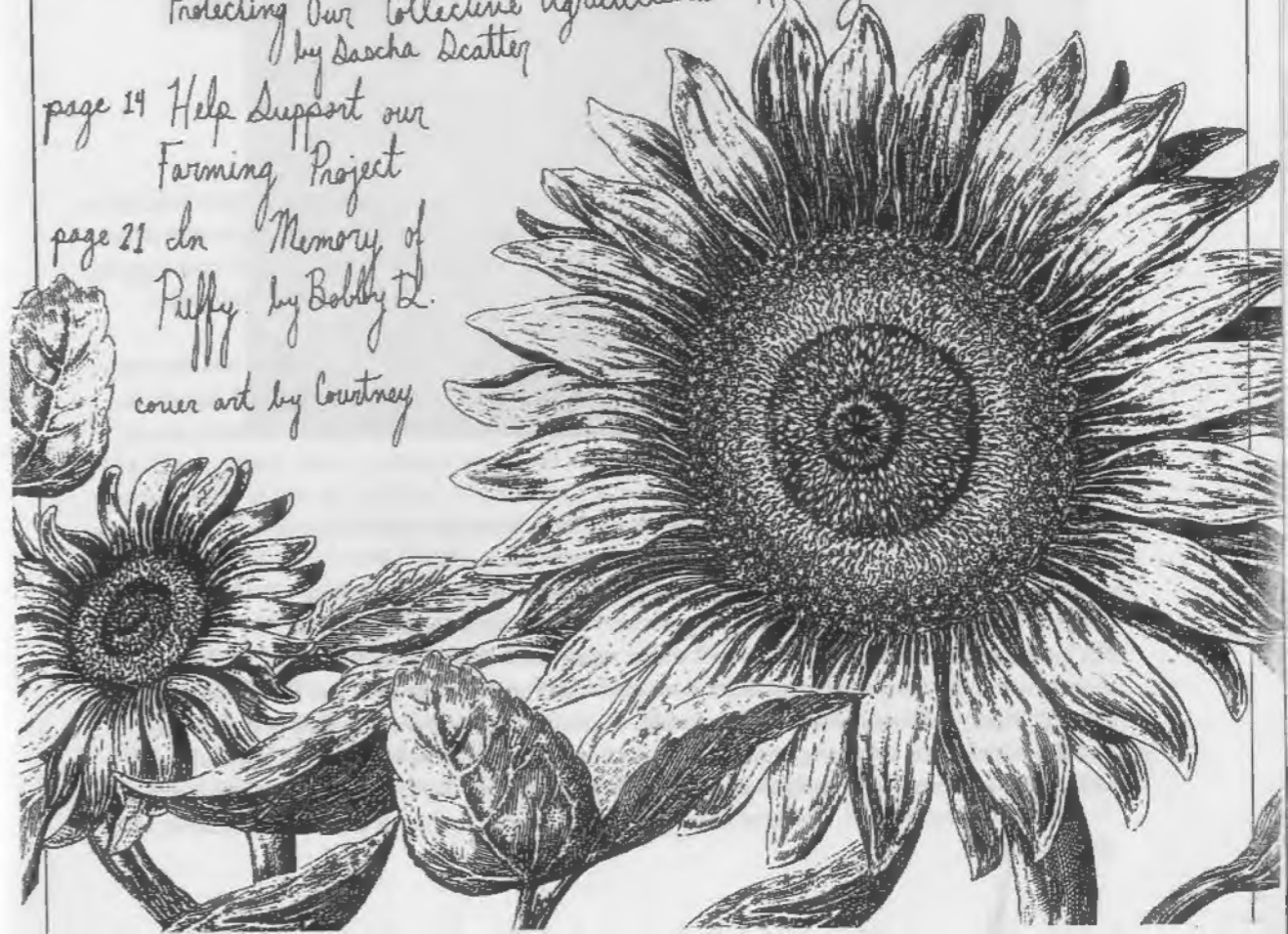


Nestled among the tidal Hudson and the rising Catskills our small community is bustling with activity as we plan for the coming spring. Through brainstorming sessions, over potlucks, during meetings and at work on the land, we are borrowing and learning from the old while forming unique ideas and notions anew. We are a budding organic farm, a node in a network of rural activists, sharing our land and visions with travelers, family, friends, and neighbors. We hope to foster a cross-pollination between urban and rural living that can allow us to deepen our roots and challenge conventional priorities. For a rural community to thrive in the 21st century, we need to work within traditional models of self-sufficiency while simultaneously cultivating local and regional relationships to share with one another the fruits of our labor. We want to create a physical space and a forum for community sustainability.

Our 60 acre collective farm in Germantown aims to connect with and support our local and broad community through projects based in sustainability and creativity. We have been a functioning collective for a bit less than a year and work in symbiosis with our sister community, the Bob, 20 miles away. We are examining the intersection between the cultivated and the wild, working to implement more simple and sustainable systems. We are building a greenhouse, pruning the orchard, and setting the cogs in motion for our farm project. A community space is developing, our barn and land being used for events, performances, classes, skill shares, workshops, art projects, community dinners and more. People from all over are learning about the project and coming to help out and help dream of what's to come. This is our newsletter.

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cover art by Courtney





The first year garden: A retrospective

By Kaya Weidman

I'd say it all started with digging and hacking at the rock hard soil in Chiapas, helping to create a nice circular garden that would serve as an educational garden for sustainable agriculture techniques. It dawned on me that three young women sweating away with pick axes and digging forks for a month just to loosen the soil didn't seem entirely sustainable. My interest in sheet mulching grew alongside with my fondness for rototillers.

When I returned home in March, the ground was still frozen and the sap was flowing from the thirty-odd tapped sugar maples at the Bob. Impatient to begin the season I turned the layered compost pile just to get it to thaw out faster and feverishly started seeds in every sunny window at the Bob. My Fedco seed order arrived as we threw together a little double-tiered cold frame against the south side of the garden shed at Germantown, and got all the cucurbits started along with a successive round of heirloom tomato starts from the saved seeds of our dear farming mentor, Renard.

While I was tending to the seedlings, the sheep and goats were busy mowing down the area where the 1/8-acre garden was going to be. We first tilled around the time of Passover. With the resources and time we had on hand, tilling seemed the best choice, what with the free use of Renard's magnificent rototiller, and no truck yet to haul materials in for sheet mulching. I struggled between Eliot Coleman, John Jeavons and Masanobu Fukuoka in my planning and decision making, all of them being inspiring, and fairly contradictory at least in the initial stage of cultivation. I felt confused by how satisfying tilling the soil felt. Kevin kept referring to it as a "microbial massacre", and I became anxious to get it amended, shaped and mulched, never to be tilled again.

May was a strange month. As I heard gardeners and farmers complaining (at my job at the nursery 15 miles away) about the plants rotting in the ground because of so much rain, our little microclimate somehow missed it all, and the grey threat of rain rarely amounted to anything substantial. We awaited the rain, and in the meantime, ordered a drip irrigation system from Fedco. We all stayed out past sunset hand raking the beds and tucking the seedlings in. At first, we mulched mostly with Cape Cod seaweed delivered by my dad, and eventually with the pond scum from our beloved swimming hole.

The rains finally came and with it the weeds and the work. June was shocking, the plants grew faster than I could've imagined. One week I spent away, and returned to see an eruption of growth: the brassicas in their full late spring glory, the chard and beets, obscenely colorful and lush. The potatoes had become shrubs; the tomatoes a tangle of green, the early salad greens already bolting. The paths were soft and green with white clover.



As spring blistered into summer, the lushness drew an onslaught of pests. My heart ached at the sight of early tomato blight, solanaceae flea beetles on the tomatoes and eggplants and slimy potato bugs eating away at the potato foliage. As we worked to identify and address each one, it seemed that another would pop up: wilting squash leaves revealed squash vine borers, squash bugs, and striped cucumber beetles. The turkeys pecked away at the onions and cucumbers, and brassica flea beetles polka dotted the arugula. Tomato hornworms decapitated the tomato plants while chickens snuck in to destroy the spinach. It was mayhem. As Farmer Dan puts it, I had to take the role of triage nurse, deciding what was most crucial and what was beyond salvage. I was a wreck. I couldn't sleep. We spent hours removing blighted foliage from the tomatoes, carefully

slicing open the stems of squash plants to pull out fat white wiggling jerks. We must've killed thousands of squash bugs in our fingers. New batches of compost or manure tea brewed constantly on the back steps. We were desperately trying to replenish the microorganisms that had perished in the dry post-tillage days of early spring. But as I have been told by many a wise gardener, the best remedies for pests are in prevention. It was then, overwhelmed by the sheer work of it all, and fearing the thought of no stock of winter squash or canned tomatoes, that I realized how little I had shared the information or responsibility enough to handle the load. How daunting the garden had become, how heavy the cheerful gardener found herself.

As summer ached on, and with some luck of good weather, helpful hands, and perhaps enough compost tea, the garden daily filled all our bowls, baskets and buckets despite the impediments. The eggplants surprised me, all ripe and bulbous by early July. The tomatoes ripened faster than we could fill our bellies and shirts with them, the carrots were sweet and strong, and the corn swelled in its husks. The rainbow chard proved the great winner all season long, thick and bright and lush through and through. The table queen acorn squash managed to survive the various cucurbit disasters, and by late summer we had a wheelbarrow in the patch for harvesting. The potatoes with their invisible yield brought an unexpected surplus. The Seneca Ganandagon tricolor heirloom flint corn revealed one uniquely beautiful ear after another. (We then dried it and selected the most beautiful kernels from the healthiest ears to save for next year's seed) The season just kept on and the tomato plants that started in June brought on the next round of tomatoes. We put up the sweetest farm stand on 9G, and folks filled little baskets of peppers and tomatoes and flowers to set out by the road.

It seemed that all summer long the weeds filled in faster than we could keep up. We let the amaranth and lamb's quarters reach above our heads before we macheted them down. Several varieties of thistle and a thorny nightshade made weeding more painful than usual, though I was amazed by the few work party days that left entire sections of the garden spacious and mulched. This gave me a taste of the pleasure of a well-maintained garden, worked on by many.

Some time in mid-September I reread Masanobu Fukuoka's, "One Straw Revolution", and felt slightly embarrassed by the labor and suffering that it took to cultivate a little piece of land. It seemed so forced, so counter-intuitive, and I felt deceived by modern agricultural practices. I felt as though I had worked against so much, it became at times a battle against nature. The labor and input made me feel deserving of a certain amount of response, an exchange of product. I had adopted the same capitalistic relationship that characterizes conventional agriculture, instead of the relationship of mutual nourishment Fukuoka's practices embody. I felt the contradiction of my values and my practices, yet unable to figure out what to do other than work harder to straighten things out. I want to see my role as a gardener to be a facilitator of growth, a supporter of a process that does just fine when left to its own devices. I want to nurture environments within ecosystems rather than cultivate plants in a plot of soil.

As the season slowed into autumn, cover crops were sown, straw was put down, and my heart lightened at the thought of the soil's winter rest (as well as my own). I realize now that intrinsic to the development of my gardening practices is my observation and experience over time. I cannot fully appropriate the practices of others, nor can I design well without a thorough understanding of the land and ecosystem I'm working within. This year allowed me a familiarity with the soil, a sense of timing, knowledge of the insects, a series of examples, and an awareness of the dynamics and possibilities of this particular garden. From here I'll be entering into the next year with a history and connection to work from, a trust in the practice of growing here. The value of our work clearly lies not only in the return of produce but also in the deepening of our understanding of, and relationship to, the natural systems that we work with. While working to serve a cultivated environment, I must allow for what I may not expect and seek answers from the existing systems themselves. Understanding comes from awareness of what is actually happening.



We have GOATS & CHICKENS & DUCKS & TURKEYS & GEESE & CATS & DOGS

They teach us many things. First of all, to be responsible & consistent: they are happiest and healthiest if they get clean water, grain, hay, old bread, vegetable scraps and human attention at the same time every day. For many of us, this is the first time another being has really come to rely on us: we are building TRUST. AND we are building milking stands and fences & fixing rooves & cleaning troughs and carrying water & obtaining hay... it takes some effort and some collaboration to get our little family of animals through the winter.

In the spring, we will use their manure and bedding to fertilize our gardens. When it gets warmer, the chickens will lay more eggs and eat all our vegetable scraps. The goats will be milking and the ducks will roam around eating insects. The turkeys will continue to make us laugh. The geese will stand guard and the dogs will romp. And the cats! Well, you'll just have to come visit to appreciate the world's most amazing, entertaining cats (otherwise known as the infamous furbies.)

We take Turns
taking Care of Them.

Sometimes,
we eat them.
We are learning what it's
really like to raise domesticated
animals. There are

things that are beautiful, and
things that are hard.

(Just like life, ya know?)

When there are too many roosters,
they attack the hens, and we
have a problem. Sometimes we
have to kill a few roosters to
keep peace. Sometimes everything
works out. There are compromises
and there are PARADOXES.
We are learning as we go...

by Ashley McNamera

Growing Together at the Roots With My Friends by sascha

It's Monday morning in Germantown, NY. Woke up to my housemate Kaya asking me to help move the farm truck. I stumbled out of bed, pulling on my soil stained pants, big snow boots, someone's jacket cause there's a pile of them by the door and we're always just wearing each other's clothes these days. There were half a dozen folks outside already there at the bottom of the hill by the barn, blowing steam out of their mouths and noses, getting ready to push the 1994 Ford F-350 orange diesel truck out of the mud. Kaya put it into gear and revved the engine— wheels spinning, mud everywhere. We piled a bunch of heavy metal from the scrap pile in the back, old carpet underneath the tires, she still wouldn't budge. Finally Erika hooked up her truck to the front and we pulled it out triumphantly, up the hill and out onto the road. Came back inside and Bobby and Patrick started making french toast and omelets in the kitchen with dumpstered veggies from the health food store in Hudson, bread from Erika's dad's bakery, and eggs from our chickens. Right now I can hear Ashley working on the goat feeding schedule and people milling about working on their various projects, our stealthy cats darting in and out of the doors, a flurry of activity all over the house. I feel so lucky on mornings like this, the taste of maple syrup in my mouth, sun shining on my face. This isn't any kind of life that you see on TV shows or read about in glossy magazines, but I can't imagine what I'd rather be doing than living in a house with a bunch of my friends and working outside with each other on our collective farm.

In This House That I Call Home

Since the early Fall I've been living on an old farm two hours north of New York City with a bunch of sweet and wonderful people. And we're all bound together by our passion for food: planting it, tending to it, cooking it, eating it, sharing it, talking about it, reveling in the wonder of it. We're about to put up a greenhouse, grow a whole lot of seedlings from amazing seeds, and in the early spring we're going to till up an acre behind our pond and grow a whole lot of really good, healthy food. We have two beautiful, pregnant goats who are going to give birth sometime at the end of this month and we've been getting everything that needs to be ready for the new babies. We're having barn and field work parties and tree-pruning workshops every weekend in February to reclaim what we can of the 10 acres of neglected apple orchards on the property. But really, amidst all of it, the most important thing we're doing these days is learning how to trust each other, learning how to support each other, and learning how to work together and watch each other's backs in a world where real trust and friendship seems harder and harder to come by.

I can't even believe we're really doing it sometimes. I moved into this house back in August when I was losing my mind being a city boy living in a dark room down the street from the Brooklyn/Queens Expressway and working in midtown Manhattan. I had a few sad looking tomato plants growing in pots on my windowsill and I could barely relate to my housemates. Suddenly, four months later I'm in this intense relationship with a whole pack of people, most of whom I didn't even know four months ago and we're living our collective dreams together, making it up as we go like it was all meant to be or something.

Communities Grow Like Forests

It just feels natural. It's like how those permaculture people talk about levels of succession in the forest: how after a clear-cut the first thing to grow in the woods are the pioneer species, the tough spiny sprawling plants with deep roots that create the habitat for the next layer of plants to arrive and the climate for all the right microorganisms and the mycelium to take over the soil. Then all those plants and species attract the bugs which bring the birds that come and bring with them the seeds of shrubs and bushes that grow from far away. The shrubs and bushes hold the soil and create the space for the next wave of succession, everything grows and intertwines, and eventually the climate is right and large trees to grow again once more into a healthy forest ecosystem. It's a spontaneous process but there is a greater order to it.

There's a similar process of succession and growth taking place in our community right now except it's all about the people and our relationships to each other and the physical environment. Not so long ago this place was a neglected old farm. Our friend Asa bought it with the dream of hosting a community like ours. It's not clear what's going to happen in the long run, but we know it's not going to get taken away from us anytime soon— we can put our love and sweat into it and it won't just disappear into some strangers greedy hands. Which opens up a lot of possibilities.

This land has had its share of problems and rocky times since our friend bought it five years ago. Although he poured so much of his heart and hands into working on it, irresponsible college kid tenants, neglected frozen pipes, holes in the barn roof, and a decent dose of drunken circus chaos made it questionable whether this place would actually ever be a place for healthy and vibrant community. But little by little the right series of pioneers and successions arrived: a small crew of people with vision and drive, a cast of quirky characters with crazy dreams, some old biodiesel vehicles, a pond to swim in, a bunch of work parties, a 5 gallon bucket of smelly compost tea, a handful of folks with carpentry skills, a lost sheep fiasco, a broken stair and a bag of quick drying cement, some rowdy anarchists, a slapped together outhouse, an impressive house greywater system, a bed of very healthy brussel sprouts and a ton of cherry tomatoes, a pile of old travel zines, some bee boxes, a couple of bottles of homebrewed wine, three large pigs, friends visiting friends visiting friends from the city, you can paint the picture for yourself.

We Spend a Lot of Time By the Woodstove in the Kitchen

You can see succession dramatically at work when the furnace gets fixed and suddenly the house is habitable for winter when it wasn't clear that it was going to be. People gather around fire and heat. The people who've ended up sticking around for the winter have turned out to be really committed to turning this place into a functioning, awesome community: figuring out cleaning systems, hashing out guest policies, making real time for group emotional process, working out our collective money and financial situations, trying to figure out our general decision making process, and trying to figure out exactly just who we think we are in this world. Meanwhile we're making sure all the people are getting fed and the animals are getting fed, we're trying to build better relationships with our neighbors, grappling with our sketchy reliance on oil and talking about energy sustainability, dealing with whatever other dramas we have in our lives...it's a lot of work and not very easy. We bicker about food and dishes. Sometimes we argue about larger life questions and don't always end up in happy agreement. We try not to step on each other's toes too much but we inevitably end up sometimes doing it anyway. We all come from different places, different backgrounds, and have different relationships to food and work and money.

Living in community with people different than us is not something we're taught how to do well growing up in this society. But amidst it all we're braving it, taking risks, and getting close to each other. Winter helps. We cook a lot of hot food. We spend a lot of time by the wood stove in the kitchen. We stay up late telling stories about all the trauma and drama from our childhoods. We're a community of folks who don't fit so well in the normal world, and that's probably why we're so passionate about creating something new.

It's All About the Friends

Jay showed up the other week and was teaching us how to ice fish out of the pond, Tiger was baking apple crisp and playing fiddle all over the house. Tucker came over a couple weeks after I moved in here and helped me build a platform for my bed. Jolie came over and played guitar and sang freshly written songs. Alecia gave amazing backrubs and cooked good food. Lailye taught yoga classes. Rene and Moose painted the big upstairs bedroom. The entire Beehive Collective camped out in our living room for a week making art and strategizing the revolution. Our friends in New York City from the More Gardens! Coalition, the Curious George Brigade, and the Bluestocking Collective have all come up to work on projects with us and eat lots of food.

We all know that once the warm weather hits we're going to have friends visiting from all over the place and we're going to be working out in the fields together, daily yoga classes in the living room, cooking huge meals with fresh produce, teaching classing and hosting skillshares, having dance parties in the barn. There's nothing more exciting than working and playing together with a bunch of your favorite people.

Learning From Our Elders

We're bunch of kids but we're not afraid to ask for help from the older folks. We couldn't do it without them. On Thanksgiving our house was packed full of friends and relatives — five different people's families showed up. A lot of them were meeting each other for the first time, swapping stories about their kids, everyone so impressed by how well things have been coming together. Bobby's mom came down from New Hampshire and taught everyone circle dancing. Courtney's mom spent hours in the kitchen with us baking pies. My mom and her boyfriend came and brought me a down comforter to keep warm in the middle of winter. Ashley's parents and sister's were around and super helpful and great.

The intentional community family connections run deep around here. Kaya and Dylan were raised as tiny ones on a big commune in Tennessee. They have lots of thoughts about what worked and didn't work. And so do their parents. Kaya's dad showed up the other week with a GPS tool and a chainsaw and the two of them spent the day mapping the entire farm property and cut down a bunch of the dead apple trees for our firewood. Their dad actually visited a few times over the season and had us outside working together — felling, bucking, hauling, splitting, and stacking — getting our wood pile ready for the winter and giving us lots of hard earned advice. Then there's a 77 year old local woman named June Munson who's been teaching crocheting and telling good stories to some of the folks around here. It feels really good to be around young folks who have lots of respect for older folks. It just makes sense in a way and makes me feel like we might actually have a chance at sticking around.

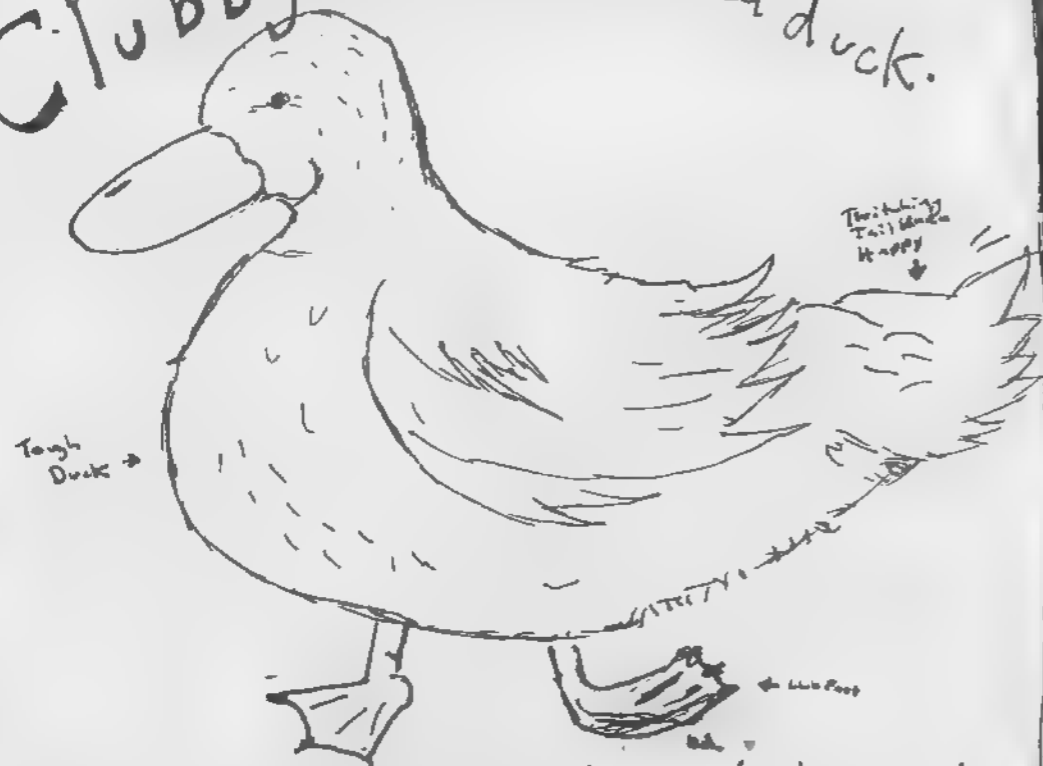
Really Just the Beginning

So I'm not sure why I'm telling you all of this except for the fact that I'm really happy about it. I'm so excited to be working on such an amazing collective vision. There are these totally magical moments when we're all working together outside or in the barn or in the kitchen. These moments when we're having large group discussions and meals and people are really present with one another. These moments when we're all dancing together at a show that we've all worked so hard to make happen and the music sounds so sweet and everyone looks so alive. These are moments when everyone realizes how important this all is and we're all looking at each other with wonder and appreciation. It's really a sight to behold. No matter how this all turns out in the end it's going to be worth it. We're building the path that we're walking on, making friendships that are going to last our lifetimes.

These days I wouldn't trade anything in the world for standing by the Hudson River in the middle of winter with my friends, just down the road from our crazy house, the sun setting over the Catskill Mountains and reflecting pink and orange and red and yellow in the chunks of ice floating in the water, watching this amazing group of people I call my community taking care of each other and playing around in the snow. It makes me feel lucky and proud, humbled and free to just be myself and know I have a crew that really has my back and will look out for me if I go through hard times. And we have packs of friends doing stuff like this all over the country: from the Albany Free School folks just North of us to Short Mountain Sanctuary in Tennessee to the Rhizome Collective in Austin to the Linnaea Farm up in British Columbia to the Victory Gardens crew in Maine. We're all just getting wiser and more interesting as we get older, our stories more intertwined and more outlandish and more solid. And really the adventure's just begun.

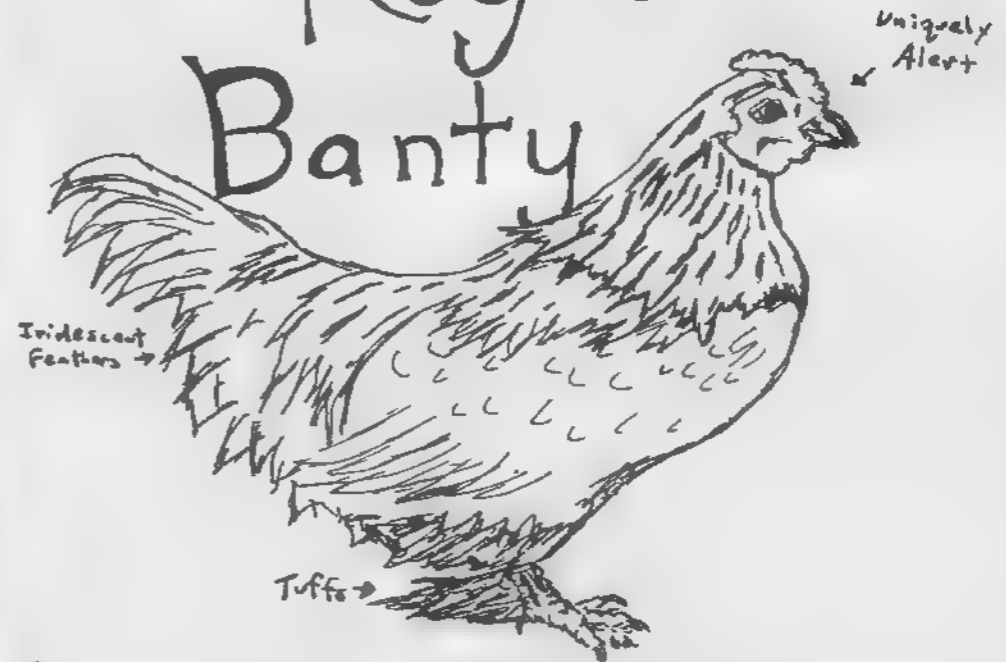
It's not even Springtime yet.

"Clubby" the Club-footed duck.



Somehow surviving countless turkey and goose attacks, always dirty, and having some kind of nervous neck twitch, this duck still holds it's own in the barnyard. Clubby has sharp eyes and a quick wit that keeps her healthy and safe. But it's her thrill for living and bold behavior we love to watch. One morning in a windy -5° sunrise, Clubby jumped into the steaming drinking water head first. Any fowl that tried to drink was snapped away as she splashed and happily quacked, later her fathers froze.

The Rogue Banty



The Rogue (or Rebel) Banty's behavior flies in the face of social norms. Bantams are very small and colorful Japanese chickens. They are often more communal and less violent than larger chickens. The Rogue Banty follows no rules of the bantams. Taking no sides, he sometimes roasts with the large chickens, sometimes hangs with the goats and often rides solo. Always curious, if the weather permits he follows us around the garden, which we love. This rooster seems to be asking for special treatment but often has to battle off larger hens + roosters with his intimidating growl and 'side shuffle'. The pounce and circle, with neck feathers raised is the traditional Bantam vs. Bantam fighting stance.

Heirlooms, Hybrids, Corporate Seed Monsters, and Protecting Our Collective Agricultural Heritage

—BY S. SCATTER—

When people talk about “heirloom vegetables” just imagine them like an heirloom anything else: something so good they’ve been passed down from generation to generation, seeds saved and replanted, preserved and cherished. When people talk about “open-pollinated vegetables” they are talking about populations of adaptable plants whose seeds can be saved and replanted the following year. Up until pretty recently, most farmers and gardeners saved their own seeds and the plants they grew adapted to the local soil and weather and pests and diseases.

When people talk about “F1 Hybrids” they’re referring to the offspring of two distinct varieties of open-pollinated plants whose genetic base has been selected and reduced to be so narrow and sparse that when they’re crossed the resulting mix of genes in the new seeds creates a plant that’s incredibly productive and uniform for one season, but whose seeds are all confused and useless for farmers when planted the next season.

If I’ve lost you with the awkward scientific language, just remember this part: **farmers who use hybrid seeds need to buy new seeds every year because they can’t save the one growing in their field.** Hybrid technology changed the whole face of the seed industry because it turned seeds from a natural resource and part of the life cycle of the farm into a marketable commodity. Back in the 1970’s all the old regional seed companies in this country were bought out by global petrochemical companies who already owned the fertilizer, herbicide, and pesticide factories. If you think about it for a second it doesn’t make any sense for fertilizer and herbicide and pesticide companies to own the seeds we use: what incentive would they have to breed seeds to be healthy or resistant to pests and diseases? It’s a really bad idea.

But it just gets worse: in the 1990’s the petrochemical companies merged with the pharmaceutical corporations and now call themselves the *Life Science Industry* and spend enormous amounts of money trying to figure out how to suck the life of vegetables and sell them to us as expensive pills and how to genetically engineer their seeds to be dependent on their chemicals. (And they spend just as much money trying to figure out how to convince us that these are really good ideas that we can’t live without!)

Last year, 2005,* *Seminis*, the largest vegetable seed company in the world, was bought by Monsanto Corporation for \$1.4 billion. Monsanto is the leading proponent and practitioner of genetic engineering. Monsanto seeds and biotech traits account for 88% of the total acreage of genetically modified seed planted worldwide. The whole thing is such a big disaster it makes my head spin when I think about it too much. So growing open-pollinated and heirloom seeds, saving their seeds, and then teaching others how to do it is one way of retaining some degree of self respect and autonomy from these corporate monsters.

While it has become way less common in this country as our agri-cultural roots disappear into the monoculture, farmers all over the world have been saving and trading their seeds for ten thousand years and most farmers in the world still have the skills to save their own seeds. Here in the United States there is a small but growing movement of farmers and gardeners who are actively saving their seeds, adapting them to their local environments, and working towards a vision of community controlled agriculture that is completely independent from the corporate seed barons. Here at the Germantown Farm a number of us have some experience saving seeds and we’re really excited about learning with each other and drawing upon the knowledge of our fellow seedsfolk here in the local area and around the country.

Here on our farm we feel privileged to be getting our seeds from the wonderful folks at FEDCO up in Maine, as well as our friends like Frank Morton from Wild Garden Seeds and the Kapuler Family from Peace Seeds out in Oregon. We’re honored to be participating in seed trials through NOFA-NY, and well as have neighbors like the biodynamic farmer folks at Turtle Tree Seeds. We feel blessed that there are existing national networks like the Seed Savers Exchange, and support organizations like the Organic Seed Alliance that are helping our movement to grow. We’re very inspired by the work of pioneers out on the West Coast like Dan Jason of Salt Spring Seeds, Susanne Ashworth who wrote *Seed to Seed*, Dr. Carol Deppe who wrote *Breed Your Own Vegetable Varieties*, Raoul Robinson who wrote *Return to Resistance: Breeding Crops For Reduced Pesticide Dependence*, David Theodoropoulos from J. L. Hudson Seeds, George Stevens from Synergy Seeds, and the folks at the Bay Area Seed Interchange Library in Berkeley, California.

On our farm in the Hudson Valley of New York we’re planning to build a healthy library of seeds, teach seed saving workshops to people in our community, and spend the coming years stewarding heirloom treasures, adapting new varieties, and sharing the magic of our harvests with friends and strangers alike. This is truly our collective heritage and we understand how important it is that we do this work together.

Help Support our Farming Project!

A healthy relationship between people and the source of their food is essential to a conscious community and culture. The opportunity for that relationship is not available to most because of limited access to resources or education. In the face of the escalating global seed crisis, genetic modification, and food privatization, the basic ability to be a part of what you eat is increasingly difficult for people around the world. The disconnection between people and their food exists across lines of class. Our culture of convenience denies people the connection to their sources of nourishment.

In response to the unhealthy course of modern culture and out of our passion for working with the land we have started a collective farming project. In this project, we want to create opportunities for conscious relationships around nourishment and waste. We recognize the need for such relationships as a key element of social change and ecological sustainability. We intend to start small. We seek to make the resources we have been granted available to urban and local communities in order to cross conventional boundaries of access. Larger cultural and ecological issues are visible in local communities, and can be addressed most directly through small-scale empowerment and education.

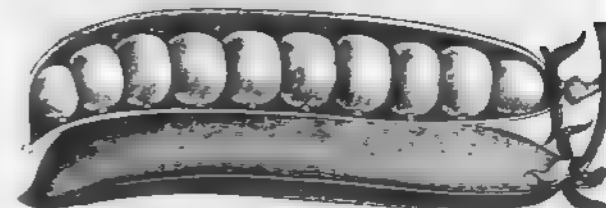
Starting in the spring, we will be cultivating one acre of land behind our pond, as well as restoring our 10-acre orchard and wild harvesting edibles and medicinals. We will be growing a large variety of annual vegetables while incorporating methods of organic soil improvement such as cover cropping, mulching, compost tea and perennial polyculture borders. Last year our eighth of an acre garden produced far more than we, our guests, and our animals could eat or give away. This year we will be growing to provide for people in our local community and urban communities as well.

The process of growing food and learning about how to grow food enables people to develop the connections and understanding that is at the root of sustaining healthy communities. We plan to involve ourselves and our vegetables in the small and large community through local resource sharing and education, community supported agriculture, markets, and seed saving.

Your donations and involvement in our farm supports:

Local Resource Sharing and Education

- Donation of produce and hot meals to events held by a local community social justice group, Dutchess Justice, in Poughkeepsie, twice a month.
- Facilitation of tours and educational visits from nearby urban youth groups.
- Donation of materials (seeds, compost, and seedlings) to an urban garden in Hudson, NY as well as More Gardens in New York City.
- Our barn and land as **community space**, made available for meetings, workshops, performances, crafts, classes, dances and skill sharing.



Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

A CSA is comprised of a community of individuals who pledge support to a farm operation with the growers and consumers providing mutual support and sharing the risks and benefits of a growing season. Members of a CSA pay for a 'share' of the farm at the beginning of each season. In return they receive produce from the farm (typically a box a week) throughout the growing season as well as the satisfaction of being part of the growing process.

- Supplementing a sliding scale urban CSA in the South Bronx with specific vegetable crops, which would provide low-income urban families with affordable organic produce.
- Developing a transitional CSA model for small emerging farms, helping to bridge the gap between growers and consumers, fostering consumers seasonal awareness and creating enough flexibility for the farmer around the risks inherent in a first year CSA.
- Creating a link with an urban collective, the Tortuga House, and establish an exchange of produce and involvement with the farm.



Markets

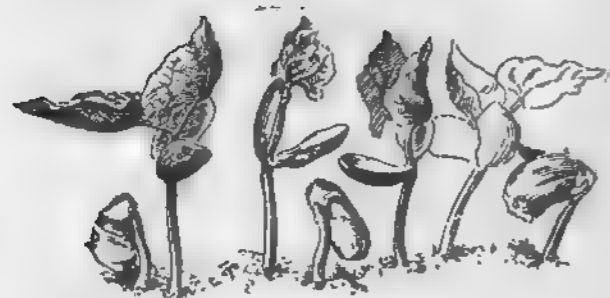
- Building and maintaining a small roadside farmstand.
- Selling specialty produce through an already established booth at the Green Market in Union Square, Manhattan.
- Selling at local farmers markets and to local restaurants.



Seeds and Sustenance

The global seed crisis, which has been brought on by corporate control of the seed market and genes is escalating in severity to the point that most farmers in the US have been discouraged from saving their own seed. This leads to biological homogenization and depletion of locally adapted and heirloom varieties. We hope to address this issue by:

- Teaching seed-saving and plant breeding workshops to gardeners and farmers in our local communities.
- Growing out and saving organic, open pollinated, locally adapted seeds, to preserve the purity and strength of both new and heirloom varieties of good organic vegetables. These seeds will be available both for our own continued use and for the establishment of a seed bank to share seeds with others.
- Sustaining our immediate community with our own produce.



Getting Our Vision Off the Ground

By sharing our produce, skills and seeds locally, practicing sustenance farming, local marketing and the CSA model, we hope to move forward as a thriving community that serves the local and global community with food, education, connection and inspiration.

We currently have the land, tools, seeds, designs for a greenhouse, a little Bolens 1250 tractor, a diesel Ford F350 and a lot of support and friends. We are ready in our hearts and bodies to work toward these visions. At this point, our main obstacle is financial. Please help out with the startup costs!

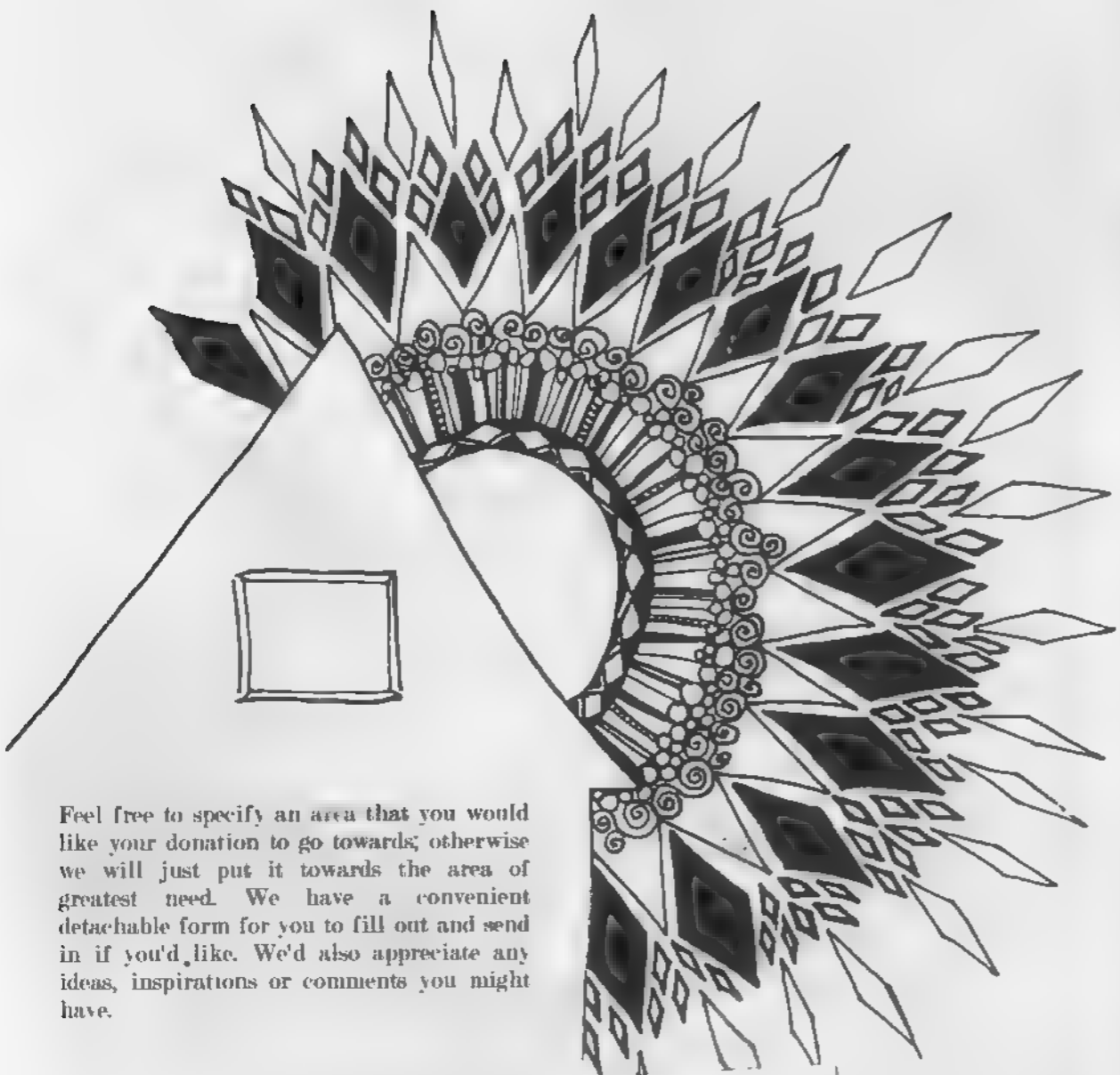
Estimated First Year Costs

- \$1,000 Farm truck maintenance (grease conversion, repairs, insurance)
- \$800 Hardware, tool maintenance, misc
- \$700 Irrigation (pumps, hoses, drip line)
- \$600 Fencing
- \$500 Tools (pruners, hoes, harvesting knives, rakes, digging forks etc.)
- \$500 Soil amendments, soil tests
- \$400 Small Tractor
- \$400 Tractor maintenance
- \$400 Cooler room
- \$325 Re-may, and other row cover materials
- \$300 Chicken expenses (coops, feed, chicken tractor)
- \$200 Seeds
- \$200 Carts and wheelbarrows
- \$250 Greenhouses
- \$150 Soil (for seed starting)
- \$100 Sheds and processing stations
- \$100 Scales and containers
- \$100 Business license

Total: \$7125



So far, we have received a donation of \$300 for our seed order, and we bought a small used tractor, but the rest of the list is yet unfunded. Any little bit helps. We are implementing a sustainable infrastructure so that the initial start up investments will go a long way! Thank you all for so much support in these beginning stages!



Feel free to specify an area that you would like your donation to go towards; otherwise we will just put it towards the area of greatest need. We have a convenient detachable form for you to fill out and send in if you'd like. We'd also appreciate any ideas, inspirations or comments you might have.

Make checks payable to
The Germantown Community Farm

THANK YOU SO MUCH!

I would like to continue to receive this newsletter! ☐ true ☐ false
I am making a donation and would like for it to go toward
☐ _____ ☐ area of greatest need
I want to know all about how the Germantown Farm collective CSA works!
Please send us some comments and feedback, stories, pictures, letters and ideas.

♡ Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! ♡

donation

non-monetary

mail


other info

this is
the
spot!

Germanstown Farm Collective
4872 rd 9G
Germanstown, NY 12526



Puffy 'the mohawked duck' was
eaten by a coyote. We
will always remember him
for his unique tuft of
white hair, which may have
been his fatal undoing.
R.I.P. dear friend.



germantownhouse@yahoo.com
518-537-6139

Hello. I'd like to introduce to you the oldest running advice column in the United States of America:

Asky Gasky

by Ann Richards Lupine

There are times in life when you just end up with little to nothing more than the question "Why?" And for these times, it is important to have loving relationships you can trust to give you answers both caring and critical. Insight. Advice. And there are times when you need a bit more convolution, an answer, but more in the form of a question. And there are, perhaps even more so, those times when we seek nothing but the obvious, like wondering why mud looks like poo, or how did just enough stuff get together, just so, to form all of everything and get it going on. It is for all this, and anything more that I am Asky Gasky, and have been offering my column to this publication for the past 25 years. My dedication to ethical clarity and emotional resurrectionism, not to mention rigorous professionalism, give me an advisory edge that is literally unparalleled. Who better to write to asking advice than an ostentatious phony well practiced in the arts of chaffing and mimicry?

Your questions will be given the intimation of deep and timeless pondering, that still essence of interpenetration that pervades all wit, wisdom, and scripture, but without the hassle of waiting all that long. I will write stuff about what you ask me. Take this recent query for an example:

Dear Asky,
Or is it Gasky? Or is it Asky Gasky?
Sincerely, Denzel

Dear Denzel.
It's Asky Gasky.
Semi-sincerely, Asky Gasky

Or this:

Dear Asky Gasky,
Why is my skin so pasty white, my mind so restless, my appetite and attention so succinctly bored?
Sincerely, the Moat

Dear Moat,
Can you count the minutes you spend each day outside of human controlled and human designed environments on your hands? I feel that I would not be surprised if you could. Do you notice or have you ever felt conscious of the fact that humans seem to be largely incapable of more than a fraction of the altruism and community inherent in the nature of the plant life that is all around us, building and sustaining our world? It's sort of funny to picture you, in your pleasant, conditioned home, in front of a TV wondering why it seems you look like you don't do much. Get some heart-pounding exercise every other day, find out what it is that you eat, limit feeling like you know exactly what is going on to five times a day, and please, write back again.

Semi-sincerely, Asky Gasky

So you can see, it is advantageous to ask questions. Please, feel free and invited to write me any kind, and I promise, I will think about it for a minute, and then write some things I thought down so you can read them. And don't forget to include your mailing address, for if your question is published, you'll receive a free t-shirt!
Semi-sincerely, Asky Gasky
Po Box 85
Pine Plains, NY
12567

colinsbonesandballons

a letter from Colin on the West Coast...

so, the udderday I went ta the Albany Bulb which might've been the first time in the daylight, can't remember, & my friend was shooting a kinda shitty halfass movie there, and my other friends were walking a dog, and I went off in search of things. & nooked nuzzled away I found rather faded blue plastic lunchbox. & I lifted it up a& shook it and it carried a particular uncomfortable weight & shuffle held within. so I opened it & pretty much what I'd assumed was inside,--lots and lots of old bones. Really big dog or human sized bones, pelvises and femurs and shit and altagether it was an awkward feeling there...I carried them with me for the next hour and half, & was loosely thinking of bringing them back home ta store in sum type of display/art project, or just hawk sumwhere on the worldwidewebternet. brought them over ta my relocated friends and weirdly separately at least 2 of them had deduced the inner-contents just as easily without even looking. seems like certain people can just identify the sound of dry bones being shaken in a held plastic, which's a weird phenomenon, but it really seems pretty identifiable just on the sound/shake. i didn't feel that particular certain way bout taking them haunting me, of say spirits from the bones' owners lunging out ta me at night from under my bed, but, maybe that was just for lack of thinking too hard bout the feeling. moreso though I just felt kinda disturbed about keeping them that clsoe ta me, for my fascination with them & how disturbing they'd seem kept in my belonging,--even if jusrt for a short time till I helped move them along. & I also felt uncomfortable about claiming ta making them "art" because they really already were, fully, like there wasn't really anything worth adding, and that'd be a bit bullshit just ta claim them for finding. and as that moment even moreso it felt like they belonged where they were and should probably just join the sculpture of everything here already, but maybe just needed better placement than it held previously,--ta really bring attention & the haunting burden towards them even moreso.

so as we were leaving I climbed the rickety ladder-tower on the top of the Castle, and delivered it maybe 2/3rds the way up, hung on a flagpole, but not really blowing in the wind. I think it looks kinda hidden, so much smaller held way up in the sky, but still fills that aire of menacing. & I'm not sure if I placed it right but it overlooks the property nicely...

Earlier, not too previous that afternoon day we'd all sat down and watched this blue balloon travel along the beachy/inlet-y part. carried along the top of the water, traipsing like Jesus. when first noticed it was joined with a family of ducks that really didn't seem ta mind it's presence and almost maybe playful with, and continued it's path further away from them, and really was kind of a slow steady sure focused straight line that it was just drawing across the water. we remarked maybe it seemed if there was a person swimming directly underneath it, eventually it reached this rocky wall buildup edge area, and after a couple fearful held seconds that we might see burst upon the rocks, *poof* flew flipped right over the edge & soared for at least a few feet. & then it landed hidden from view, and we thought fearfully again unfortunately, right after such a triumphant leap. for a wait, wait, wait, it seemed ta be gone sumhow. then *whoep* there it was again, trotting along the next beachy-area of path. had developed a bit more of a childlike bounce & hop method of travel on the sandyer only slightly water-layered terrain, waiting between hops, maybe looking down amazed at the surface held underneath. Really really exactly that "thrilled & entertained kid" method, but still that same straight path all along ta the waters real edge, where a flock of gathered seagulls scattered scared off by their approaching toddler. --and then the really amazing part, the thing kept straight right over the full open Bay, skipping hopping tossing along spiritedly right a-top the water, the same verve as ever, entirely disregarding any logic or the fierce Bay winds which were blowing the direct opposite way of this steady and sure lil magnificent balloon. we cheered for like 5 minutes!! feats,--feats, I tell you! amazing feats of cheerful indomitable driving will!!

Walking away after the scene my brohiem's girlfriend was very happily drawing connections between the lil balloon's magnificent appearance ta the similar blue of her windbreaker coat, and by way of that therefore herself,; & i said well maybe that meant that either she's got that same spirit/drive in her & is following it just the same as cheerfly undeterrable by the surrounding fears or acceptances nor barriers nor winds pushing you different, or either that's a reminder that she aught to anyways. And by her I just as happily drew the connections ta all 5 of us walking away. And all of you.

THE
END

x. colin rhys wolfgang hella dodsworth

As For the Footstools Over Yonder

Just go on back now there,
those backwoods over yonder.
and find you that first footstool

and following it, si gently at first
Meet and See, whom it has
met and see
Seeing like Deer, from
where they once stood-
Behold the Procession
of the Forest and its Kin.

To meet the buck
Stand behind the Young.
to see the herds
Stand behind the Buck
cause they try to meet everybody
and listen for the Feathereds,
cause they'll always be telling on you.

and if you begin to thirst
Just go on back down over yonder
back by the Stream like Abner
and lay down on your belly.

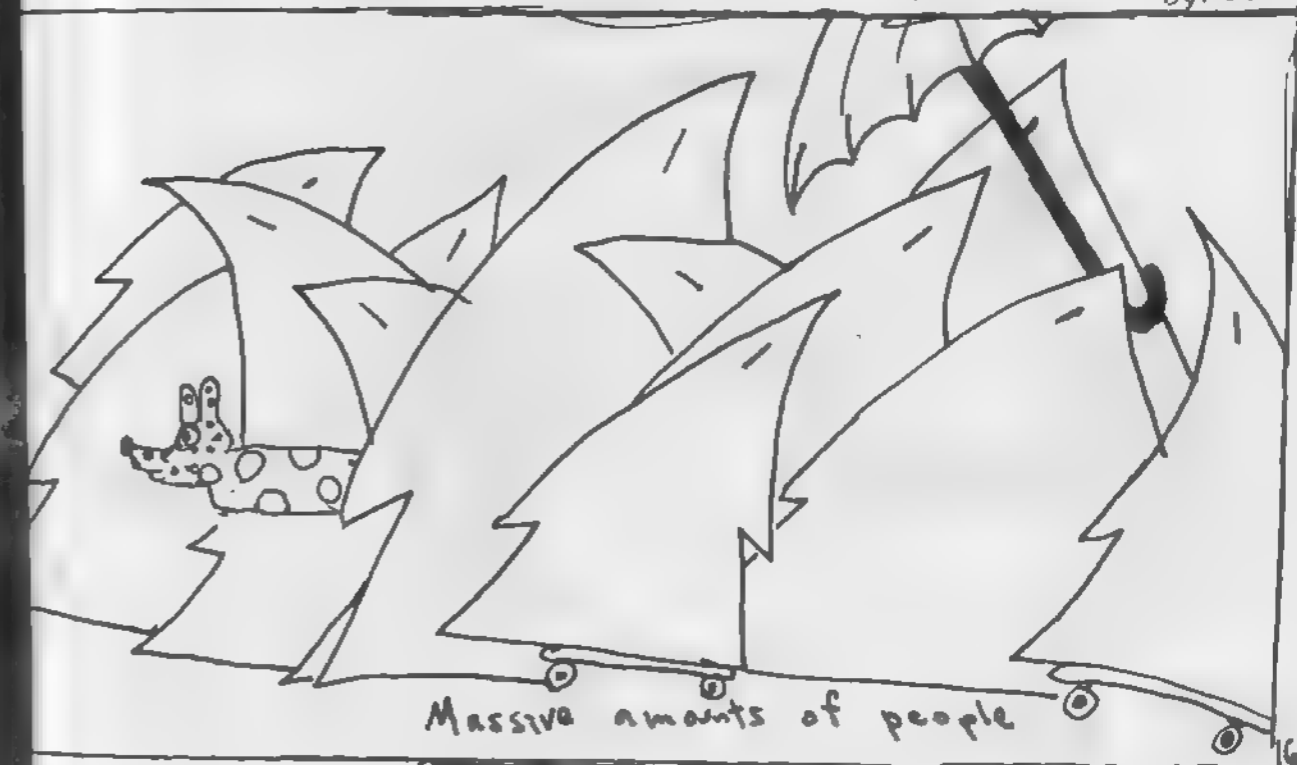


Snow turkey

Thanksgiving
at the
Germantown
Farm!

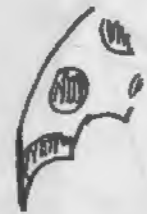
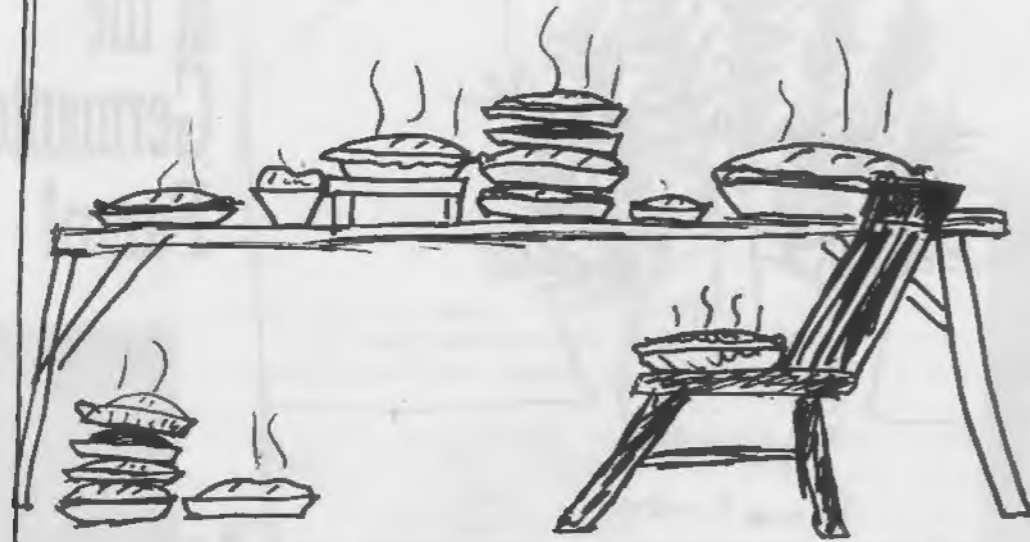
A comic interpretation.

by. BD



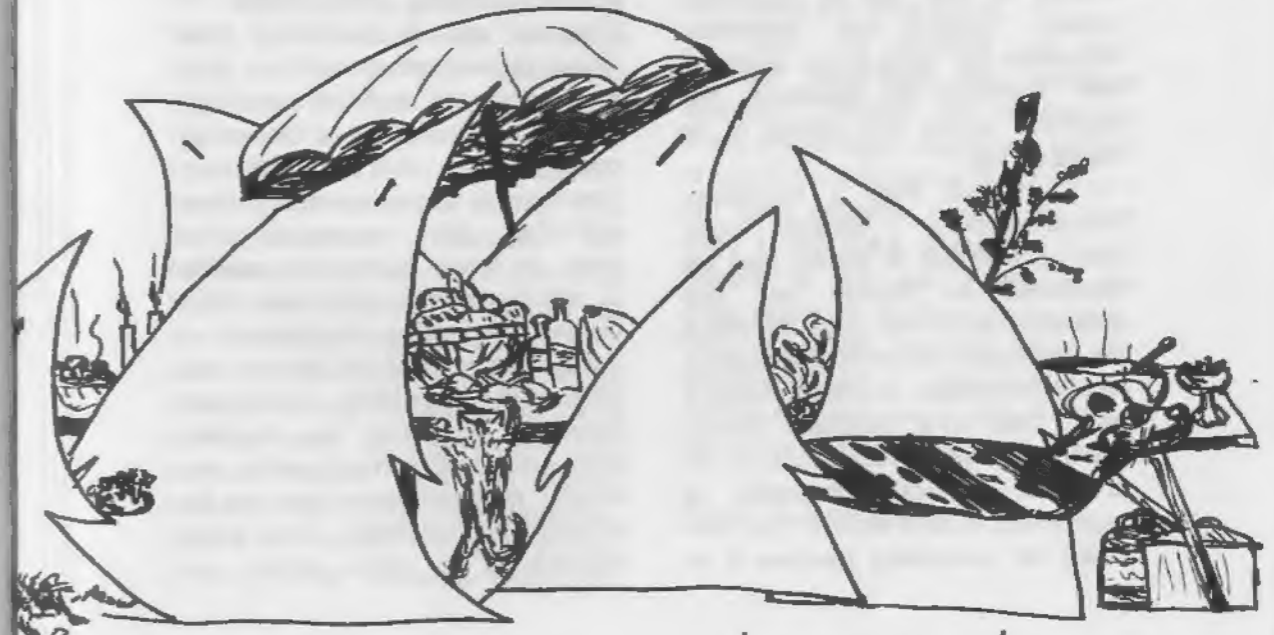
Massive amounts of people

So many pie!



Relentless beautiful snow.

Midnight jumping
on the ice and snow
covered trampoline.



Thanksgiving was beautiful!

*How doth And How Much Are The Pony Rides In Say,
Like, England? or Calypso Breeze...
Or Anti-Semitic Poetry or Hush Up Already*

by Tommy Walnut

I feel that I know, concretely, decisively, very little. That little is derived from direct experience with the world and myself, all of which is densely complex. But why is the amount I perceive judged as "very little"? I feel my own knowledge polarized by an acute overload of apparently accessible information that is ever changing. Yet it's very existence in the collective human/world sphere, cycling in and out of discovery, debate, conflict and resolution, insinuates my need to be involved, and highlights my ignorance and ineptness within this sphere of so called society.

Each time I experience almost anything, I decipher tones, ranging from joy to sorrow, and am compelled to choose one that delineates an overall sense by which the experience can be communicated, recalled or judged. A sense to identify with. This is a necessary faculty needed to engage successfully in the universal, physical community of experience, or so I believe. For how could the community function if its

parts were of disparate nature, unheeding of one another's needs? But therein lies my cancerous nagging.

I routinely come away from my life's experiences with a sense of hate for the human condition, an individual conclusion whose results are, inevitably, further estrangement from civil conditions because their solutions seem to be too much work toward an undeserving goal, and a ceaseless, begging plea for death.

Time and again I come away from cycles of involvement with the very literal processes and the seemingly ruthless abstractions of interacting sentient beings with the conflicting, simultaneous sense awareness that individual drive is necessary to grow an arena in which to survive in, and that current individual drive inadvertently and/or directly seeks to murder the past and its inherent and necessarily humbling influence, therefore degrading the existent arena in which survival needs are already met and interaction can be successfully mediated. The direct reproach of an active action or

manipulation showcases a desire and drive for an oppositional action or manipulation. Which one deserves implementation is a destiny arrived at by the resolution of the tension between the past and the present. The age old dance, indeed as old as the cosmos, that has been yielding life from the impossible scraps of void, forever.

But here we are, USA, 2006 AD, and escape from the determined effects of the past are utterly en vogue. We want it now, don't care how. Not that this is truly possible, but to be hell-bent on manufacturing an ever-pleasing present stretches the coping and desire cycles of most individuals to an agonizing limit, where habitual selfishness perpetuates habitual bitterness, which leaves the individual vulnerable to hyper-emotional manipulation, enacting a desire to desire. This desire regularly overrides the influence of the past for a chance to fulfill itself, theoretically cutting off the historically significant link to a sense of connection to every single thing, prodding the individual on in a virtual quest for a perfection that eternally eludes. Thus, the elusive nature of life is painfully highlighted, tipping the balance for many toward a sorrow-filled existence laden with

the fear of failure and a resentment of community and nature's complex systems of checks and balances, which in itself is relentlessly exploited by those in higher and higher power positions to aid them in their exclusive pursuits. All of this degrades, kills, and feeds off of the parent arena, the Earth's elaborate interconnections of widely varied life forms, which, from my and many other's perspective, seems the most likely source of information that will enable us to reevaluate our rash state of paranoid estrangement and facilitate our reintegration with the lively presence of symbiotic relation that makes the Earth thrive.

With the advance of self-centered ideologies that reinforce desperate patterns of entitlement, some exceedingly significant portion of ourselves will expire, if not we as a life form entirely. But as for right now, I can order a massive pizza, receive it, and eat it with all the clean reality of finding a berry bush. Only, I would perceive what my mind/heart/body deciphers as something quite wrong. Why? What do I know and what do I not?

This is Tommy Walnut.

Stinging Nettle
Here in the Hudson Valley, we live in a land of bounty. Stepping beyond societal excesses and over abundances, uncultivated land can provide much of what we need to aid us in our ways, nourishing and healing us year round. Stinging Nettle, to me, shows us that we need not look very far in the quest for optimal health and healing. Thru its ability to adapt as it is needed in the human body, it is able to serve all who utilize it.

The 2 types of common nettle that I speak of are *Urtica Dioica* and *Urtica Urens*, or big and little Nettle. Nettle thrives in rich, moist woodlands, along river beds, and in mostly shady "disturbed" habitats. It is recognizable by its stout ribbed and hollow stem (much like a mint plant) and its pronounced dark green pointed and oval serrated leaves. The leaves are covered in tiny stinging hairs, hence its name. The rhizome of the Nettle is thin, pointy and white, and is commonly found entangled with other Nettle rhizomes.

Early springtime is the right time for picking Nettles. When the new plants are still small and before they flower, (which usually happens in late spring or early summer) is when Nettle is most medicinally potent. As they do tend to sting, you may want to wear gloves when-a-pickin', or go without, as it is possible to avoid the sting by approaching with a gentle yet confident touch.

To me, Nettle is the ultimate multi-vitamin. It has more chlorophyll than any other known herb, and has a 10% protein ratio, higher than any vegetable. Included in its makeup are Vitamins B Complex, C, D, & K, as well as calcium,

iron, magnesium, choline, zinc, potassium, beta carotene, flavonoids, histamine and silicon, as well as high levels of easily absorbable amino acids.

For centuries Nettle has been used tonically as an effective blood builder, (and rebuilders) and cleanser. In effect it does much to strengthen and support kidney functioning and revitalize adrenal glands. Its immune stimulating action makes it an ally during colds and flus, and as an anti-rheumatic, helps to ease joint and muscle pain. It is essential for those afflicted with anemia and osteo-arthritis, and to help improve blood circulation. It is balancing to blood sugar levels. Nettle helps to provide much in the way of allergy and eczema relief by blocking histamine receptor sites from the allergen. Nettles hemostyptic (blood clotting) and anti-hemorrhagic action is great and can aid various body systems when minor internal bleeding occurs. The juice of Nettle does well for the respiratory system when disease occurs and/or bronchitis. It also helps to soothe the stomach of ulcers, rebuild healthy mucosa in the intestines, and relieve constipation.

For any woman, it is a strengthening and nourishing tonic thru-out the menstrual cycle, pregnancy, and lactation, and can quell profuse bleeding during menstruation and childbirth.

The root of the plant is a particularly good male tonic in respect to nourishing and supporting the urinary tract and prostate. It can be used in the treatment of prostatitis (to lessen inflammation) and prostate cancer, thru its great immune system/lymphatic strengthening actions.

The long fibrous stem of the plant can be spun and woven into a strong thread and made into cloth and cordage.

In order to apply Nettle to your specific needs, there are a few key ways to go about it. The benefits of the plant can be extracted thru infusion, vinegar, alcohol tincture, or simply by eating them. Different methods extract different components or constituents of the plant. For example; a Nettle Vinegar is one of the best ways to receive all of its vitamin, mineral, and anti-histamine properties. So perhaps, for a springtime tonic, Nettle vinegar would be the best thing!

Nettle Vinegar

1 mason jar, any size
Apple Cider Vinegar
Fresh Nettle, whole plant

- ~ fill jar to the top with fresh Nettles (sometimes its nice to chop em' a bit in order to fit more)
 - ~ cover in Apple Cider Vinegar, making sure there is no air left in the jar
 - ~ stick a piece of plastic between jar lid and vinegar so the metal doesn't oxidize.
 - ~ cap it, and put it away for 6 weeks (or longer)
- Thats it!

How to make a: tincture - use an alcohol with a 40% alcohol content, (scotch, vodka etc.)

Follow same procedure as with the vinegar, except you don't need the plastic. Let sit at least 8 weeks.

Infusion - Use 1 c. dried Nettle plant to a 1 qt. jar. Fill with boiling water. Cap and let sit for at least 4 hours. Drink and enjoy. This is my favorite way to have Nettles, except if you...

Eat them - In order to de-activate the stingers, alls you gotta do is steam them, and then use them as you would any other green leafy.

~ The benefits and pleasures of knowing and understanding the "green" life around us can be great, but what is greater, is also making the realization that the land we live on offers to us what we need.

